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ABSTRACT

In the sixties the crisis of the credibility and competence of schools resulted in the funding of programs to remedy school problems. The model for curriculum reform came from the university and, more particularly, from liberal arts departments having the capacity to improve curriculum content and teacher expertise. In a few instances attempts were made to require a marriage between the disciplinary specialists and personnel in the schools of education. Some of the effects of the reforms based on the university model included an emphasis on the disciplines and a lack of continued involvement in the school on the part of the specialists. Also, many teachers who were "turned on" by the new curricula and stimulating institutes were frustrated in the classroom because of inadequate financial and administrative support. The new programs, for the most part, also failed to provide for individuality. The colleges, too, failed to change their own content in response to the new curricula. Change in the university model has now been effected because of student demands. This progress in democratization should improve the university and its influence on the schools. (JH)

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THE UNIVERSITY MODEL AND EDUCATIONAL CHANGE

Richard B. Ford
Clark University

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Boulder, Colorado 80302

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FOREWORD

Dr. Ford's paper was presented at the Social Science Education Consortium's 1970 Annual Invitational Conference, which was held at the Phipps Conference Center of Denver University in Denver, Colorado, on June 12-13, 1970. Funds for the conference were provided by the National Science Foundation.

Each year the Consortium sponsors a conference to bring together outstanding educators and social scientists from all levels of the educational enterprise. The purpose of these conferences is to promote face-to-face communication among persons actively involved in attempts to change the schools. The 1970 conference was attended by 82 guests and members of the Consortium from universities, colleges, curriculum projects, school systems, and public and private agencies throughout the country.

The topic of the 1970 conference was "Lessons from the Sixties; Wisdom for the Seventies." Ford's paper was one of three presented during the session on "Lessons from the Sixties." It conveys much of the temper of the conference, reflecting a certain amount of disappointment in that the extensive educational reforms hoped for at the beginning of the decade were not accomplished, while at the same time demonstrating a willingness to learn from the efforts of the sixties and to continue the attempts at reform into the seventies.

Irving Morrissett

March 1971

THE UNIVERSITY MODEL AND EDUCATIONAL CHANGE

Richard B. Ford

Clark University

A study of our history suggests that one unique quality of the American experience has been our ability to weather crisis after crisis and usually emerge triumphant, at least up until a few years ago. One of the crises of the sixties was that of credibility and competence in the schools. As with many other crises, including depressions, space lags, wars, and corruption, crash programs were organized, funds appropriated, task forces named, and experts brought in. So it was in the schools; so it was in the social sciences. Private foundations as well as the federal government moved quickly in the early 1960s to "correct" mediocrity in the schols, including social science instruction. You will remember the John Hay Fellows program; perhaps you will also recall the eight original Project Social Studies grants authorized by the United States Office of Eduation * and the first years of the Advanced Placement Program.

The Rise of the University Model

All of these reforms assumed that solutions to school problems could be found in the universities, and more particularly, in the liberal arts departments

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*The eight centers, funded in 1963, were: University of Minnesota (Edith West), University of Georgia (Marion J. Rice and Wilfred Bailey), University of Illinois (Ella C. Leppert), the Ohio State University (Paul Klohr), Carnegie Institute of Technology--now Carnegie-Mellon University (Edwin Fenton and John M. Good), Syracuse University (Roy A. Price), Harvard University (Donald W. Oliver), and Northwestern University (John R. Lee). In 1964, four additional centers were funded at San Jose State College (John G. Sperling and Suzanne Wiggins), Amherst College (Richard Brown and Van R. Halsey) Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Daniel Lerner), and the University of California at Berkeley (John U. Michaelis). At the same time the National Science Foundation was supporting projects such as the High School Geography Project, the Anthropology Curriculum Study Project, and Sociological Resources for the Social Studies.

of the universities. The university conception of education, scholarship, and professionalism was taken as the ideal on which to model educational improvements at pre-collegiate levels. Schools would be improved if only the content of educational materials and the academic background of the teachers could be made more scholarly and scientifically up-to-date. Those were the days of Conant, Commager, Rickover, and Zacharias. Teacher educators, clearly, were out of style. The liberal arts model was in.

Dominance of the disciplines continued through the sixties. The National Science Foundation funded social science programs such as short-term and year-long institutes for teachers. In 1964, Congress amended the National Defense Education Act to include summer institutes for teachers in nine fields not previously supported, including English, history, and geography. The NDEA Manual for the Preparation of Proposals stated that these institutes were "intended to provide /teachers/ special and superior opportunities to learn more about the subject matter they teach..... every instance, subject matter is to be emphasized." The Manual indirectly slapped teacher education: "Appropriate courses in methods and materials for teaching /history/ are not excluded, but professional education courses not related directly to the teaching of /history/ should not be submitted." (Manual for the Preparation of Proposals 1966, p. 38) This language appeared, I think, because these programs assumed that the liberal arts, discipline-based, university model was appropriate for secondary, and perhaps even elementary, schools. The organization of knowledge, the process of inquiry, the commitment to "substance," and the role of the specialist--all honored virtues in the university model--were imposed on the schools.

The university model was reinforced in 1965 by Title V-C of the Higher Education Act, which provided year-long programs of study known as Prospective and Experienced Teacher Fellowship Programs. But change was in the wind. Early

evaluations of the summer institutes found that without specific attention to "transfer"--organizing new knowledge in forms which teachers could use in classrooms--there would be little change in the schools. Thus, one of the guidelines of the Experienced Teacher Fellowship Program required that a marriage take place between disciplinary specialists and personnel in the school of education. The new guidelines produced several announced engagements. Actual weddings may have been fewer. I have no data on the divorce rate.

There were other important innovative characteristics in the Title V-C Fellowship Programs, including en bloc scheduling, practicum and double-practicum experience, and new relationships among Fellows and faculty; but space does not permit any lengthy discussion here. What changes, if any, resulted from these many university-based programs in curriculum development and teacher training?

Inadequacies of the University Model

Curriculum changes resulting from the activity of the sixties have been substantial and certainly will continue into the next decade. Instructional materials are different. Curriculum development projects have devoted considerable attention to new inquiry-oriented materials. Primary and secondary sources have been collected to focus on an issue or topic. Reliance on exposition, either through texts or media, has decreased. Visual materials, in several of the new curricula, are coordinated directly with printed materials. Several of the projects have wrestled with the task of developing precise statements of objectives. Some of the projects have developed strategies and materials to teach intellectual abilities and skills as well as knowledge, and a few of the projects have plunged deeply into the affective domain. Other projects have concerned themselves with the formation and proof of hypotheses. A few of the new programs have attempted to find structures either within disciplines or within the process

of inquiry of the disciplines, while others have suggested that the objectives of the social sciences should be to teach students key concepts which would be of long-range value.

But these changes have taken place within sometimes narrow constraints and have, at least at the secondary level, followed too closely the university model. For example, the hand of individual disciplines and their related professional associations has been extremely heavy. The anthropologists, economists, geographers, sociologists, and, more recently, political scientists, have extended their influence into the schools, along with the historians who have been there a long time, with specific courses to teach their disciplines. Even a cross-disciplinary project such as that at Carnegie-Mellon University, with which I was associated for four years, devotes upwards of six of its eight semesters to substantially discipline-centered courses.*

As a result of becoming involved in educational change in the schools, a few university people who previously had little or no interest in anything other than their disciplines "discovered" the schools. They went out into classrooms, taught students, observed others, helped write curriculum guides, and even wrote school books themselves.

But this number has been disappointingly small. The more typical university person's response has been to give a lecture or two in a training program, to serve in an advisory capacity on a governing board, or to write books (with little or no first-hand experience) for use in the schools. This aloofness on the part of discipline people is inextricably tied to the status and power of universities. It suggests that discipline specialists feel that they have little to learn from the schools; they have only things to give to the schools and

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*Of the eight semesters, one is devoted to political science, one to economics, three to history, and one to the behavioral sciences--largely psychology.

school people. The reward system, as presently constituted within colleges and universities, allows professors, who are largely free from any control by anyone in the schools--teachers, parents, administrators, students--to exert enormous influence in curriculum and in teaching. Thus, the training and curriculum programs have created many academic observers who enjoy dabbling but who avoid the prolonged and sometimes sticky commitment which is vital if any substantial change is to penetrate our schools.

Let me sound a note of moderation. Some university people are putting themselves daily on the firing line. Others have made career changes and indicated substantial commitment to change. The emergence of clinical professors at many institutions is an encouraging sign. But the vast majority of university personnel, in spite of new programs--and sometimes because of them--have removed themselves from the school scene. Such removal reduces sharply their effectiveness in dealing with school problems. Unfortunately, it does not necessarily reduce their influence.

Inadequacies in Implementation and Design

The programs have also touched teachers. The new curricula and stimulating institutes "turned on" many teachers. They became excited about their subject; they aspired to new goals in their own classrooms. But in too many cases, these teachers returned to traditional administrations and to inappropriate perceptions of learning. They had little or no opportunity to purchase materials, reorganize schedules, design new courses, or to share their ideas with colleagues. In brief, they were not their own men. In fact, one of the major shortcomings of the sixties was, again, that a university model was assumed to be good for schools, i.e., that individual teachers should work within narrow specializations drawing upon their individual resources and knowledge. Such rugged individualism does not always work in the universities; I don't know why we expect it to work in the schools.

Other problems with the curriculum reforms have been the cost of implementation. The new materials, in too many cases, are expensive. The cost per student is substantial; crisis-ridden school systems simply are unable to purchase them. Although there are exceptions, too many of the new curriculum programs will not be implemented because schools cannot afford them. In addition to materials, other cost factors are involved. Some new programs require special inservice training programs. But teachers in financially distressed school districts have not been able to participate proportionally in training institutes and fellowship programs.* In other cases, the new materials draw upon several forms of media which require complex equipment. Old buildings and impoverished schools have neither the facilities nor the equipment to use the media effectively.

Another range of problems with the new materials has been their lack of recognition of individual needs. For the most part, the curriculum materials have been prepared for a national market. Schools are individual institutions; students are unique human beings. To assume that there are single bodies of information or ranges of skills which will satisfy national needs is naive. Somehow the projects must address themselves to personal differences, to individual rates of learning and motivation, to a variety of interests and frames of reference, and to unique processes of inquiry. For the most part, the curriculum and training programs of the sixties have failed to provide for individuality.

Changing the Schools by Changing the University

Let me return to institutional change. The assumption that changing teachers will change schools is an understandable one, as is the notion that changing

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*For example, although in 1960 23% of the nation's population lived in cities of more than 200,000, in the summer of 1965 only 6.2% (157 out of 2,541) of the participants in NDEA history institutes came from schools in these cities. (Thompson 1966, p. 10)

curricula will change the schools. However, the experience of the sixties has demonstrated, without question, that the problems of the schools lie far deeper than teaching and curriculum. They lie in the basic assumptions about knowledge and learning which teachers have absorbed at colleges and universities and, incidentally, which universities are finding challenged today. I also question these assumptions. Let me try to explain why.

The curriculum and training programs have been one-way affairs. They have not really influenced the schools because only rarely have these programs influenced the universities. The presence of a Project Social Studies program, for example, at Harvard has made little impact on the Harvard Ph.D. in history or political science or other social science fields; two or three NDEA summer institutes have had relatively little carry-over into regular undergraduate programs, thus creating situations where new teachers have needed summer institutes the day they graduated from college. On a national level, the existence of innovative school programs has done little to alter the reward system of professionals in the disciplines or of the professional associations themselves.

In fact, during the so-called revolution of education in the sixties, the four-year institutions of higher education which have been growing the fastest--the former teachers colleges--have retreated to the most conventional of reward systems to "build" themselves into "respectable" liberal arts schools. And ideally, when state legislatures can be convinced, these state colleges become graduate degree granting institutions, not on a new model that has any relevance to the crisis of the schools but on an old model which is simply not appropriate for the great masses of students who are now flooding through the schools and into the colleges. Thus, the new programs have not really influenced the training of teachers. Because colleges and universities have and will continue to have professional status, I feel strongly that hope for change in the schools rests largely on what happens to the colleges. This is where consumers come in.

For the first time in this society, educational consumers are challenging the reward system of higher education; they are questioning the assumptions upon which education has been provided; they are questioning the appropriateness of the present college model for the schools. Democratization in education is here. What national institutes and curriculum projects have only begun to change in the colleges, and therefore in the schools, democratization more than likely will accomplish. Prestige and support for unlimited research wavers; indifference to teaching is openly challenged; disregard for the consumer's anguish is under fire. College reform is imminent. A new breed of teachers of teachers and, therefore, of teachers is emerging. TTT programs suggest that schools, parents, university faculty in the liberal arts as well as education, and students share responsibility for changing the schools and colleges.* Similar groups in schools and colleges are beginning to work on curriculum innovation. Students sit on boards of trustees, assist in recruiting and selecting college presidents, and share responsibility for selecting and developing new courses. Change is upon us.

My brief mention of the new force provided by consumers does not suggest that schools be turned over to consumers--far from it. I am suggesting that educational consumers have been too far removed from decisions which affect their education and eventually their careers and therefore they should have a voice in devising their own education. I am suggesting that student motivation--and therefore learning--will be much more effective if students feel they are a part of the educational enterprise.

My criticism of the university model does not suggest that the university model be destroyed nor does it suggest that research be abandoned--far from it.

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* TTT are initials for a new program to Train Teacher Trainers. Authorized under the Education Professions Development Act and administered by the Division of College Programs, Bureau of Educational Personnel Development, United States Office of Education, the program is seeking new ways to improve the schools through changing colleges and universities which train teachers and the teachers of teachers.

I am suggesting that universities enjoy enormous prestige and can, with the help of consumers, lead the schools into new teaching and learning. I am suggesting that good teaching and effective learning are closely tied to competent and lively research, but I also note that the entire research syndrome has grown all out of proportion.

Setting the Stage for the Seventies

All has not been in vain in curriculum reform in the sixties. Clearly the training programs have helped to alert teachers to the massive shortcomings in many of the traditional materials. Dissident students have helped there, too. Moreover, the programs have proved, without question, that schools alone, or students alone, are unable to meet the demands placed upon the curriculum. The new curricula have also demonstrated, in perhaps a left-handed way, that curriculum change is only one step in an extremely complex procedure. To change schools involves far more than bringing new packages of products into classrooms. Also, the curriculum changes have sparked a growing awareness that much important learning takes place outside of formal classrooms. Again, dissident students have helped to accent this awareness. The older western notion, rooted in the Greek philosophical definition of man, assumed a difference between cerebral man and visceral man. The newer programs have begun to suggest that man is one--that learning is a holistic process, not simply a mental one, and that experienced emotions are perhaps equally as important as a trained mind. Though the curriculum reform of the sixties has fallen short of the actual revolution that some have claimed for it, it has sown these seeds of awareness. The real curriculum revolution is a task for the seventies.

Thus, my thesis, in a few words, argues that the curriculum and training programs of the sixties have provided the attitudes and pre-requisite skills,

that the democratization of the present day has provided the means, and that the seventies will, hopefully, provide the time to reform the educational institutions which are critical to the growth and survival of any culture.

I am not without optimism. Approaches such as the TTT programs, although filled with frustration, are a promising beginning. Newer directions within the professional associations such as the History Education Project, suggest that the message is getting through. Community based training and curriculum projects point to bold and exciting new ventures. Colleges are increasingly becoming aware of their relations to their immediate communities. There is reason for hope in the seventies.

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